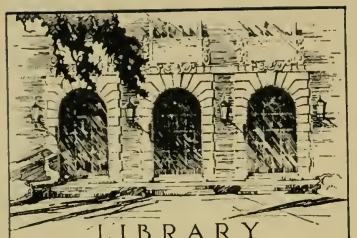

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TWO SPEECHES

OF

ROBERT R. TORRENS, Esq., M.P.,

ON

EMIGRATION,

AND

THE COLONIES.

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MARCH 1, AND APRIL 26, 1870.

EXTRACTED FROM

"HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,"

VOLS. CXCIX.-CC.

LONDON:

CORNELIUS BUCK, 23, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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EMIGRATION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 1, 1870.

Mr. R. TORRENS said, in undertaking to bring under the notice of the House the efficacy of emigration as a remedy for the distress so widely prevailing, he did not presume to claim credit for any truer or warmer sympathy with that suffering than he was satisfied stirred the hearts of other hon. Members; but he stood, in relation to this question, in a position so far peculiar that, owing to his having resided for nearly a quarter of a century in a land where such distress was absolutely unknown, its very strangeness rendered him more sensitive to its influence, impelling him to action; and the same circumstance placed him in the position of being enabled to testify, as an eye-witness, to the efficacy of emigration, when judiciously conducted, as a remedy for that condition of suffering which all alike deplored. He would not take up the time of the House by dilating upon details of that distress; but having already assumed its existence to be admitted and sympathized in, he would content himself with observing that the statistics of pauperism, though exhibiting a serious increase, by no means afforded a true measure either of the extent or intensity of suffering actually existing, inasmuch as they disclosed only the increasing number of those who, succumbing to pressure, become actually chargeable upon the poor rate, but tell nothing of the suffering of the still greater number who, with a patience and fortitude deserving all commendation, endure the pangs of insufficient sustenance and all the depressing incidents of extreme poverty, hoping against hope from day to day, if by any means they may escape the degradation of becoming chargeable on the parish. The evidences of this state of things, though not afforded by statistical tables, are only too patent to all who will be at the pains to inquire into the condition of the working classes. There might be—he

wished it were in his power to say confidently there were—reasons for believing this calamitous distress to be but temporary as regarded the condition of the artizan class; but as regarded the agricultural labourer, the case throughout a great part of the country was undoubtedly chronic. When there was employment for two there were three seeking for it, and by this competition wages were kept at a scale which barely sufficed to supply food, clothing, and lodging essential to sustain a single man in vigor. In the case of the married labourer, therefore, that amount of food must be curtailed that the wife and children might be clothed and not starve. Lassitude and depression, induced by insufficient sustenance, created a craving for ardent spirits to arouse the system, or for the drugged beer of the pot-house to stupify and deaden the sense of suffering. The dwelling of the labourer seldom afforded sufficient accommodation to admit of separation of the sexes and observance of the ordinary decencies of civilized life. The conditions of such an existence were inconsistent with moral or intellectual culture—and the labour of a man thus enfeebled in body and almost brutalized in mind was dear even at the paltry wages paid for it. Disease and premature decay induced by those causes incapacitated for labour at a comparatively early period of life; a result hastened by despair of being able to rescue himself and family from the downward track at foot of which the inevitable workhouse yawned to receive them. This was no exaggerated picture, but a true description of the state of things in certain districts, and its existence was a disgrace to the civilization and humanity of this wealthy nation. Happily it was confined to certain districts. Notably our Northern counties were free from that opprobrium, a circumstance which afforded absolute assurance that it was remediable by human agencies. But wherever this state of misery existed—whether the locality be rural or urban—whatever be the industry, whether agricultural or manufacturing—and whether the distress be temporary or chronic, the proximate cause was one and the same, excessive competition—competition induced by the existing disproportion between the number of labourers and the amount of employment afforded within the limits of these islands. Probably no one would be found to deny that the distress which they deplored would at once be alleviated if only it were possible to interpose Nova Scotia or New Zealand in the ocean space between Great Britain and Ireland, so that the labour and capital here in ex

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cess might pass over to fertile lands inviting cultivation. The competition in the market for each would be relieved—the Irish land famine would be appeased — and the previously impoverished, because inadequately employed, labourers would, with their families, become largely customers for the manufactured products of those whom they had left behind in the old locations. The beneficial agency of such a migration would therefore be two-fold—immediate in reducing competition for employment, and ultimate in increasing the amount of employment for those who remained. As this augmentation of acreage of these islands was impracticable, as the mountain could not move to Mahommed, Mahommed must move to the mountain. That was, for migration they must substitute emigration, and analogous, if not identical, results would be attained. He was aware that that had often been denied, and probably would again be denied, by those who pleaded that emigration drained the country of its strength, its best producers; since it was the young, the vigorous, the enterprizing, who emigrated; leaving the aged, the feeble, the listless, to burden the ratepayers of the country. To that he would venture to reply—first, that the emigration which went on spontaneously or with the aid of Colonial funds, and which could not be interrupted, was almost exclusively of that valued class; but the emigration which he was prepared to advocate for the relief and at the cost of the mother country, would be almost exclusively of middle-aged parents accompanied by their children. Secondly, that the young, the vigorous, and the enterprizing were a strength only in the proportion in which the country afforded them employment. When they exceeded that limit they were not a strength but a danger and little less a burden than the aged and infirm. Thirdly, he would reply that the declaration of policy by Her Majesty's Minister for the Colonies in "another place" should go far to dissipate the idea that those who took up their abode in British Colonies ceased to constitute portion of the strength of the Empire. Large employers of labour need not be uneasy lest emigration be carried to such excess that upon a revival of trade they should find a scarcity of hands to avail of it. The ties of home and kindred were strong and not lightly broken. The reluctance to abandon an occupation in which skill and adroitness have been acquired by long practice, in exchange for one laborious and irksome, because unaccustomed, was also powerful, and would not be en-

countered except under pressure of circumstances amounting to something like necessity. Upon revival of trade, or any other cause supplying permanent employment at adequate wages, emigration would cease of its own accord; but, pending the contingency of increased employment from that source, they were not justified in leaving in indigence and misery thousands of their fellow-countrymen who, if removed to a position of competency in the Colonies, would, as customers for our manufactures, be largely instrumental in bringing about that revival of trade so earnestly desired. Again, it had been urged that that class of men were not suitable colonists, and that the demand for skilled labour was limited. There was some truth in that objection; but, after the experience of many years as a colonist, he dared assert that its applicability had been greatly exaggerated. He had known hundreds of artizans whose strong limbs and determined hearts had overcome whatever there was of difficulty or irksomeness in the change of avocation. He must, however, admit that there was a considerable degree of truth in that objection; and therefore it was desirable that any continuous or extensive emigration promoted or directed by the Government of this country should be of the agricultural class. The wisdom of this course would appear manifest when it was remembered that experience proved that new inventions and devices for increasing the efficacy of human labour when applied to manufactures did ultimately and vastly increase the amount of employment, insomuch that it might, without exaggeration, be said that wherever by such means two men were enabled to perform the task of 10 the result had been to cause 10 to be employed where two only found work before. This was so because manufacturing industry, co-expansive with the markets of the world, could not be circumscribed by the narrow limits of these islands. But as regards agriculture this was reversed. If the steam plough, the mowing machine, and the reaping machine, superseding the spade, the scythe, and the flail, enabled two men to perform the task of 10, no increased demand for labour ensued to absorb the eight thrown out of employment so long as the limits of these islands were allowed to circumscribe the area within which that industry was to be exercised. Hence it would be their true policy to divert to other fields of production the labour which constantly gravitated from the rural districts towards the towns, intensifying the competition for employment already excessive

in those great centres of industry; and by that means, rather than by any extensive emigration of their skilled labourers, they might indirectly and gradually, but safely and effectually, relieve the distressed condition of their artizans and mechanics. He believed he had now made out a sufficient case to establish the expediency and the efficacy of emigration as a remedy for the distress so deplorably prevalent. It remained to consider from what sources the funds requisite for the application of that remedy might be derived. The Colonies, as they would benefit at least equally with the mother country by any well-considered system of emigration, had naturally been looked to as a source from whence aid might be expected. Speaking with a very intimate knowledge of the facts, he regretted his inability to entertain any sanguine expectations of material aid from that quarter. The Government of the Dominion proposed to afford some small aid in looking after the emigrants when landed on their shores, and, not without a fair show of reason, excused themselves from further contribution, by pleading that their money would be availed of by emigrants *en route* to the United States. Throughout Australia, prior to 1837, the Wakefield system of colonization had been more or less operative; the principle of which was that the value which population conferred upon land on which it was located should constitute a fund for defraying the charges of emigration. The waste lands of the Crown, so far as they were placed at the disposal of the local governments, were so placed to be alienated by sale only, and the proceeds held subject, as regarded one moiety, to lien in the interests of the people of England, available for generations to come, to relieve this country of surplus population. He lacked words wherewith to convey to the House an adequate idea of the beneficial working of this system. In an evil hour, no less for the Colonies than for this country, the Colonial Minister of the day conceived the idea of bestowing upon these small communities the vast estate of the people of England in these lands, without any reservation of the emigration moiety; and, at the same time, a form of government, the most purely democratic the world had ever known, was introduced into them. An immediate consequence of throwing the entire control of this land revenue into the hands of the class of hired labourers had been the abandonment of the Wakefield system—they withdrew the bridge by which themselves had passed to independence—and

since that time but a meagre and inadequate sum had been grudgingly doled out by the Australian Legislatures for emigration. Wages had been forced up to 6*s*. or 7*s*. per day; but the previously rapid advance in population and wealth had been arrested, and the working classes of this country, without their knowledge or consent—and he ventured to add without the cognizance of their representatives—had been deprived of that fund which, at a period of severe distress like the present, would have been available to transport them to lands where liberal wages and a fair future prospect would reward their industry. Such conditions did not warrant any reasonable hope that the Colonies would contribute any sum sufficient to have an appreciable effect in relieving the labour market of this country. If, therefore, that relief was to be afforded they must look at home for the means; and that brought him to the concluding consideration, towards which all the remarks, with which he had, he feared at too great length, troubled the House, were intended to converge. He would assure the House, and especially Her Majesty's Ministers, that in offering suggestions, which were the result of much careful thought, upon a subject in which he took the deepest interest, he did not presume to dictate or prescribe any special course as that which should alone be adopted. On the contrary, he held that not one agency but several might with advantage be called into play for the promotion of emigration; and in that spirit he offered a few suggestions to be considered with others for what they might be worth. Voluntary efforts were being made, and in these the merchant princes of this city had, with the liberality which ever distinguished them, contributed large sums, to be expended under the auspices of the Emigration Aid Society, in furtherance of this great work of charity. He would venture to call it this best work of charity, for it was free from that alloy which, more or less, entered as an ingredient into other modes of relief. It did not break down the spirit of self-reliance in the recipient, but placed him in a position of independence. Neither was the benefit conferred upon the individual alone. It endured to all who might be borne of him for generations to come. Voluntary efforts of this kind should by all legitimate means be encouraged; and with that view he begged leave urgently to press upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government the expediency of assisting the efforts of the society he had named—a society which num-

bered amongst its active administrators many Members of that House—the Lord Mayor of London, and others, whose names were a guarantee for a judicious and faithful use of any means that might be entrusted to them—by placing at their disposal some of the Government transports or vessels of war which might be suitable for conveyance of emigrants, and not likely to be again or speedily commissioned. He would venture to hope that no considerations of departmental convenience, or other such obstruction, would be allowed to interfere with what the public voice loudly and distinctly called for in this matter. But whilst voluntary efforts should be availed of and encouraged, it would be worse than folly to shut their eyes to the fact that the scope and magnitude of the work in this case requiring to be done was altogether beyond what could be accomplished by private benevolence. If anything effectual was to be done for the relief of the present distress, or for the permanent improvement of the condition of the working classes, it was not in hundreds, but in thousands that families must be transplanted; and for such a work they must look elsewhere than to private resources and voluntary associations. It remained for consideration whether the funds required for this object might, with greater justice and expediency, be drawn from local rates, from the general taxation, or from both. It had been objected, and the objection insisted on with some pertinacity, that a local rate for emigration would lay an additional burden on those who remained for the advantage of those who emigrated. That objection would be fatal were there any question of a special rate for emigration; but as he would presently show that simply by a more judicious use of the amounts already drawn from the pockets of the ratepayers, they would be in a position to afford substantial relief, that objection, on the score of injustice, fell to the ground. For the emigration of a family such as he had referred to as drifting towards pauperism, but not yet paupers—say, the parents over 40 years of age, and four children under 10, equivalent to four statute adults—the sum of £50 would suffice if transplanted to Australia, or £30 if transplanted to Canada. The mean of these amounts—£40—would, on the terms on which moneys were advanced to Irish landlords for the improvement of their estates, impose on the parish or union an annual charge of £2 12*s.* for interest and sinking fund. Surely the case needed but to be stated in order to satisfy every rational

person that, in guaranteeing ratepayers on such terms as these against the more than probable contingency of having to support this family in the workhouse, there would be the truest economy for those who remained in this country, and that, so far from imposing any additional burden, the future pressure on the ratepayers would be effectually relieved; whilst, at the same time, the higher wages and cheap and abundant food which reward industry in new countries would enable the emigrating parents to bring up their family in comfort, with a well-assured prospect of future independence. To render that practicable it would be necessary to amend the existing law, 3 & 4 *Will.* IV. c. 76, so as to place Boards of Guardians on the same footing as Irish landlords, as far as regarded the privilege of borrowing from the public Treasury on the security of the rates. The law, as it already stood, recognized the principle of borrowing of money for emigration purposes; but, in addition to other disabling conditions, it required the sum so borrowed to be repaid within five years, and limited the amount to a sum not exceeding the average of a half year's rates collected in the parish or union. The amendment of the law in that respect was the second suggestion which he ventured to submit for the consideration of the House and of Her Majesty's Government. But as a district which once relieved of its surplus labourers by the procedure he had been recommending would be liable to be again overburdened by the influx of indigent workmen from other districts, attracted by the improved state of the labour market, it was desirable to encourage simultaneous action wherever the number of labourers was in excess. And in that view, as well as on the grounds that all classes throughout the kingdom were interested in the solution of this momentous question of the condition of the working classes, he felt justified in advocating the policy of stimulating local efforts by subsidies from the general revenues of the country, proportioned to the amounts expended by the several localities. That was the third suggestion which he begged to submit. Whilst in the interests of the mother country he thus earnestly advocated the emigration of large families at the cost of ratepayers and the general public, he must in the interests of the colonists and with equal earnestness protest against any scheme that could have the effect of transferring to them the burden of supporting our habitual paupers, or persons not capable of earning subsistance for themselves and families.

The colonists, in Australia at least, had serious grounds for complaint on this score in times past, and in order to guard against the revival of any such abuse, it would be necessary that all emigrants sent out at public expense should, before embarkation, be passed by the emigration agents of the several Colonies in this country. Subject to this condition, no reasonable objection could be raised by the Colonies against receiving emigrant families of the suitable class. On the contrary, he was convinced that such families would be welcomed if sent out at the cost of the mother country, although it was true that the colonists, as they were reasonably entitled to do, required that Colonial funds should be expended exclusively on the emigration of young adult persons as the most valuable producers. In conclusion, he would remark that as he knew of no question of equal importance or to the solution of which the highest intellects of the country might more worthily be devoted, neither was he aware of any object for the attainment of which the resources of this great country might more legitimately be drawn upon. He begged to express his gratitude for the patience with which the House had borne with him for so long a time, and would conclude by moving his Resolution—

"That, in order to arrest the increase of Pauperism, and to relieve the distressed condition of the working classes, it is expedient that measures be adopted for facilitating the Emigration of poor families to British Colonies."

THE COLONIES.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, APRIL 26, 1870.

MR. R. TORRENS said, that a sufficient apology for bringing forward at this time the Motion of which he had given notice would, he felt assured, be recognized in the feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty respecting the character and the permanency of the political relations existing between this country and her self-governing Colonies. He had observed with pain that recent official communications between Her Majesty's Secretary of State and the Governments of some of these Colonies exhibited a tone of irritation, dissatisfaction, and distrust sadly in contrast with the spirit of mutual respect and confidence which had hitherto generally characterized that intercourse. He had also noticed that these conditions, so favourable for the purpose, were taken advantage of by men of great ability to propagate opinions adverse to the integrity of the Empire, opinions which were rapidly gaining a more tolerant if not a more approving assent in this country and in the Colonies, but which his experience had entirely satisfied him were as inconsistent with the true interests of those Colonies as they were incompatible with the future greatness of this Empire. The school of politicians to which he referred—and lest he should misrepresent them he would quote the language of their great apostle, Professor Goldwin Smith—declared—

> "That our possessions, if regarded as military posts, must be abandoned, because in these days of free trade commerce no longer needs cannon to clear her path; but if regarded as Colonies they must be abandoned, because in adopting free trade we have destroyed the only motive for retaining our Colonies."

He would not occupy the time of the House by discussing the arguments by which these philosophers of the closet attempt to sustain this view, because the same premises would force the very opposite conclusion irresistibly upon the conviction of every practical man observant of things as they really are. Such men

do not need to be told that the result of free trade in rendering England the workshop of the world has been to concentrate a population vastly greater than can be fed upon the produce of these islands, and so has brought it to pass that the very life of our people is dependent upon our retaining command of the seas, the high road for the transport of the people's bread and of the manufactures with which it is purchased. But the time has passed away when our navies spread their sails to the wind as the only motive power; in these days the command of the seas means coals accumulated in secure and convenient depôts where our steam navy may replenish; free trade therefore, so far from rendering it unnecessary to retain such of our possessions as afford advantages of this kind, places us under the strongest obligation of necessity to retain them.

Again, free trade, instead of "destroying the only motive for retaining our Colonies," has destroyed the only rational motive for casting them off, since it has abolished monopolies which, under the previous *régimé*, imposed an onerous taxation on the inhabitants of this country for the benefit of the Colonies, amounting, on the single article of sugar, to over £2,000,000 per annum. The most frequent objection against England maintaining her Imperial position as the central cohesive power amidst the free communities which she has brought into existence is based upon the alleged costliness of that position, and a heavy bill is made out by including the expenses of military posts and convict establishments in the same account with expenditure on account of Colonies properly so called. But, on referring to a Return recently laid on the Table, it would be seen that the charge entailed on this country for military defences, and other purposes of the self-governing Colonies in Australia, amounted, in 1865, to £69,064, and, in 1867-8, to £106,863, giving a mean of £87,963 only, a sum barely sufficient to cover the expenses entailed on these communities by the residuum of an evil inheritance entailed upon them for the relief of this country. So far, therefore, as regarded the five self-governing Colonies in the Australian group, this argument on the score of costliness was absolutely without foundation. If, however, other settlements founded under the auspices of the Colonial Office have entailed enormous cost, that circumstance afforded them no argument for casting them off, though it furnished a valid reason for reforming that management.

The casting off of our Colonies, and especially those of the great North American group, had also been advocated, on the plea that by that means we might evade the obligation to defend them against foreign aggression. But, he would ask, could England remain tamely quiescent whilst communities of her children, founded under her protecting auspices, were subjected to aggression or forcible annexation? Would she not, in such case, sink dishonoured in the estimation of the whole world, and forfeit the prestige acquired by so lavish an expenditure of blood and treasure in times past? Assuredly this result would follow upon such pusillanimous conduct in either case, equally whether those communities, ambitious of more complete independence, parted from us in amity or remained content to combine the privileges of perfect local self-government with those of common citizenship in this great Empire. Nay, even Mr. Goldwin Smith repudiates a policy founded on cowardice and dishonour, declaring that—

> "Supposing Canada to become independent, and supposing her independence to be afterwards threatened by the aggressive combination of any foreign power, no Englishman would vote more heartily than himself for risking the fortunes, and, if it were needed, the existence of the Empire in her defence."

If it be argued, as it had been argued, that the scattering of our naval and military forces in time of war would prove a source of weakness, he would confidently reply that if, once our relations with the self-governing Colonies were placed upon a reasonable and permanent basis, the wealth and strength of the 7,000,000 of the English race who inhabited them would constitute the wealth and strength of the British Empire little if at all less effectively than if those 7,000,000 were resident within these islands. He based this assertion upon a perfect knowledge of the hearty and fervent loyalty of these people, a loyalty not confined to the British-born but quite as earnestly felt by the Colonial-born subjects of Her Majesty. That loyalty, that fervent desire for continued identity with this country had not died although, with the deepest regret, he must state that a conviction—whether founded on adequate grounds or otherwise—had been induced upon the Colonial mind, that it was the deliberate policy and set purpose of Her Majesty's Government to bring about a separation; that in furtherance of that purpose some Colonies were encouraged by significant suggestions to ask for independence, whilst others were being incited and goaded on to the same end by an unequal and inconsistent

course of action, by refusal of reasonable aids in times of difficulty, by misrepresentations and bitter taunts, when the circumstances rather called for indulgent and sympathizing consideration. It was true this policy had been distinctly disavowed by Her Majesty's Ministers, and he accepted that disavowal in perfect good faith; still, the reports which reached us simultaneously from opposite quarters of the globe rendered it impossible to doubt that the line of conduct which had of late been pursued—be the motive of that conduct what it may—had had the effect of inducing upon the minds of the colonists the belief to which he had referred.

In the Dominion Parliament we find Sir Alexander Galt stating his conviction, based upon correspondence with Her Majesty's Government, that—

> "The policy of independence had been arrived at by the Imperial Government; and, so far as his loyalty to the Crown is concerned, he stood on the same ground as the Ministers of the Crown of England."

The impression created by this statement had been strengthened by the refusal of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to allow the publication of the correspondence referred to, though requested by Sir Alexander Galt, and urged by a Member of this House. In the same Parliament, the Hon. L. S. Huntington was reported to have said—

> "Opposition was useless, and Imperial influence is always too powerful for Colonial dissent. I have accepted the situation in its fullest sense, as faithfully and loyally as if I had originally promoted it. But, the first step having been taken, I see dangers in delay, and I believe it is expedient to take measures for the severance of our present relations to the Empire. This noble sentiment of loyalty to the British Crown, which has so generally and so happily subsisted among the great masses of our people. Can we forget our noble Queen? Can we dissociate ourselves from the glories and the traditions of the Empire? British Citizenship is no idle word, and what could we create for ourselves to surpass it? For a century the affectionate Colonial eye has rested from afar upon the British Throne, as the centre of power, protection and glory. Can all this trustfulness, this affection and loyalty be torn ruthlessly away? It deserves at least respect and tender treatment."

As to the views entertained in New Zealand there was testimony that must be accepted, as it was that of the local correspondent of the journal which pre-eminently advocated the Ministerial policy. *The Times* of 23rd March published the letter of their Wellington correspondent, dated the 21st January, from which, with the permission of the House, he would read a brief extract, describing the effect produced by recent despatches—

"The despatch is stigmatized freely as harsh in the extreme, ungenerous, and filled with assertions and implications showing wilful misrepresentation or great ignorance of the antecedent history of the Colony. It would, however, be impossible to recapitulate the objections to this celebrated despatch, which appears to have been commented on as severely in England as here. As the immediate consequence of Earl Granville's expressions and his declaration of the Imperial policy towards New Zealand, the expediency of declaring the independence of the Colony, of refusing to maintain the vicegal establishment, and even of annexation with the United States has been freely discussed, and it is only because the case of the Colony appears to have attracted considerable attention, and called forth the sympathy of a large and influential section of the English people, that no decided steps have been taken in one of these directions. It is also expected that the Colonial question will be fully considered during the next Session of Parliament, and the more moderate section of the community is willing to await the event of that discussion before accepting any proposal for a radical change."

They had yet more authoritative testimony in the Memorandum of the New Zealand Government, in reply to Earl Granville's despatch of October 7, as follows :—

"Nowhere more than in New Zealand does there exist a stronger feeling of loyalty to the Crown, and of devotion to Her Majesty, or a higher value attached to its position as an integral part of the Empire ; and Ministers feel assured that throughout the Colony there will arise a universal feeling of regret that the tone and purport of Earl Granville's despatch (written at a time when he must have known the Colony to be in the greatest distress), are scarcely susceptible of any other explanation than a desire to abandon this country, and to sever its connection with the Empire."

In the New South Wales Parliament, Sir James Martin, late Chief Secretary, was reported to have said—

"He was sure that, if the Colonies were canvassed from one end to the other, it would be found that a large majority would condemn that policy, which was supposed to be the policy of the Imperial Government. It might be very well for the Ministry at home, in order to retrench, to advocate the necessity of leaving the Colonies to defend themselves, and, for the purpose of inducing them to do so, to hold out the intention of allowing them to separate from the mother country whenever they should show any disposition to take that course. He thought, however, that such a course would be injurious to all concerned—to England and the Colonies."

The Hon. C. Cowper, Colonial Secretary—

"Hoped never to see the day when these Colonies should be separated from the mother country, but he thought they would be separated before many years. The Home Government had shown no disposition to favour the connection ; but he was by no means sure that if the Colonies were to think of separating, they would not move in another direction."

In the Parliament of Victoria, the Hon. G. Duffy, formerly a Member of this House, and recently a Cabinet Minister in the Colony, said, on the 3rd November—

"He admitted that we should be prepared to defend ourselves, at our own cost, for the result of any quarrels of our own ; but it seemed to him to be a monstrous proposition that we should take, so far as we are concerned, the responsibility of the quarrels of the mother country, over which we exercised no

more control than we did over the solar system. He thought that by negotiation some arrangement might be arrived at by which the Colonies might hold a position similar to that occupied by Hanover when annexed to the British Crown. That country was not necessarily involved in every war that Great Britain might undertake. It might be possible to place the Colonies on the same footing, so that unless they voluntarily chose to assist the mother country and espouse her quarrels they would be held harmless."

Were it needful, he might adduce similar testimony from other Colonies; but a brief extract from the address of Sir Philip Wodehouse to the Legislative Assembly of Cape Town might suffice as a summary of the whole. Sir Philip, speaking in his capacity as Her Majesty's representative, fully instructed, it must be presumed, as to the Colonial policy of Her Majesty's Ministers upon pre-eminently a question of vital importance, assured the Assembly that—

"In North America we have unmistakable indications of the rapid establishment of a powerful independent State. In Australia it is probable that its several settlements, with their great wealth and homogeneous population, will see their way to a similar coalition. *In New Zealand the severance is being accomplished under very painful circumstances.*"

It was passing strange to find such concurrent testimony arriving simultaneously from such authorities, separated from each other by half the earth's circumference, and each professing to have derived his information from the same authentic source—Her Majesty's Colonial Ministers—and yet to be assured by Her Majesty's Ministers themselves that they entertained no such views, and utterly repudiated the policy attributed to them. He believed that the House would agree in the opinion that the occurrence of such a phenomenon warranted the inquiry—"Whether some modification might not with advantage be introduced in the existing machinery for official intercommunication between Her Majesty's Colonial Minister and the Governments of those great dependencies?"

In contrast to the feelings which found voice in the extracts which he had read, as also in answer to those who regarded our Colonial possessions as a source of weakness, he would draw the attention of the House to the manifestations of hearty fervent loyalty and desire for permanent union exhibited only a few years back by this same 7,000,000 people who inhabited those great Colonies, a loyalty, as he had said before, not confined to the British-born, but, if possible, more earnestly felt by the Colonial-born subjects of Her Majesty, and vouched by substantial proofs. Canada, during the Crimean War, had offered to aid the mother country by furnishing a regiment. He happened to be in Melbourne when the news of the *Trent* affair

arrived. There was a general conviction that war was inevitable —if, indeed, it was not then already raging. The Victorians saw clearly enough that their Colony would be a special object of attack—that the gold ships leaving their port would be to the Privateers from California what the Galleons were in days of old to the Buccaneers of the Spanish Main. The first intimation that hostilities had commenced would probably be the presence of an American ship of war laying the town and shipping under contribution. The quarrel was one in which they had no concern, no voice. They were involved in it solely through their connection with this country, yet no thought of severing that connection was for a moment entertained. One spirit animated all—one common voice called aloud to stand or fall by the old country. Yet this was the Colony in which Mr. G. Duffy had, under the irritation produced by recent despatches, and, apparently, with general concurrence, advocated what was tantamount to severance, though within so short a period the cry in Victoria and throughout those Colonies was—"England's distress is Australia's opportunity," raised in a sense the opposite of that in which it was used by the great Irish Agitator, and the response to it appeared in the shape of munificent contributions on the occasions of the Irish Famine, the Cotton Famine, the Crimean War, and the Indian Mutiny. He regretted that Returns which he had asked for two months ago had not been laid upon the Table, as they would furnish the particulars. He could, however, from another source convey to the House some idea of the spirit which, at a time so recent, animated our fellow-subjects in that part of the world—he referred to a recent work of great interest, entitled *Experiences in Viceregal Life*, the author of which was not entirely unknown to Mr. Speaker, and, with the permission of the House, he would read a brief extract descriptive of a meeting held in Sydney, on the 20th February, 1855, to raise a fund for the relief of widows and orphans of soldiers who fell in the Crimean War.

"What charmed me most was the feeling of the people. There seemed such a hearty loyalty towards England, such an evident pride in being spoken of as Britons, and having their British sympathies appealed to—any expression of the kind being sure to be followed by hearty applause;—such a cordial recognition of the blessings they enjoyed under British rule, and of the claims therefore which England had on them—a point which was frequently dwelt on by the speakers, and always so cordially applauded that it was delightful to see. £6,000 was subscribed on the spot, though this was only the commencement; and there are still collections to be made all over the Colony."

Such were the feelings towards this country which at that time pervaded those Colonies—feelings now estranged, though he trusted

not yet hopelessly, by the course of action pursued by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. He was anxious to guard against being misunderstood on this point. He fully recognized the great abilities of the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies, and of his right hon. Friend who represented that Department in that House; and he was also satisfied that they were actuated by the best intentions. Their deficiency was one which they shared in common with their predecessors in Office—an unavoidable ignorance of the real condition and requirements and, what was of no less importance, the aspirations and sentiments of the great communities, in the administration of whose affairs those good intentions and great abilities were employed. What had occurred was the natural product of the departmental machinery under which the affairs of the Colonial Empire were administered. That Department consisted of a permanent staff imbued with a traditional policy, acquired not in the Colonies but in the office itself, in which policy it was their business to instruct the *quasi* responsible Minister, who was not always selected for any special qualification for that post, but rather as the convenience of political parties might dictate, and who was usually removed just about the time when he was beginning to gain an insight into the real condition and requirements of the communities whose interests were committed to his charge. Such a system was well adapted for its original purpose—namely, for enforcing the policy or the will of this country upon military posts, convict settlements, and plantations in which a few European masters or drivers accumulated wealth by the forced labour of numbers of a darker race; but its very aptness for that state of things constituted its unfitness for conducting the affairs of a great Empire, comprising powerful and intelligent communities of Englishmen in the enjoyment of constitutional government. Applied to such communities the precedents of the past assume the character of partiality, inconsistency, illiberality, and an offensive assumption of superiority intolerable to communities which claim incorporation in the Empire on terms of equality or not at all.

This statement was susceptible of easy proof; and he claimed the indulgent attention of the House whilst he cited instances to show that he had not brought it forward rashly, or upon insufficient grounds. He would abstain from going back to any remote date, not because there was any lack of such instances in the history of past administrations—unfortunately there was an evil uniformity in that respect—but because recent

transactions, well within the memory of the House, afforded ample material for his purpose. He would begin with the Red River difficulty as the most recent.

The Papers laid on the Table proved great care and masterly statesmanship on the part of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies in bringing to a conclusion the negotiations which had been so long pending between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Dominion Government for the cession to the latter of the North-West country. The pecuniary obligations and interests of the high contracting parties had been most carefully attended to. He also observed a laudable consideration for the interests of the aboriginal tribes. But there were others of Her Majesty's subjects nearer in blood, and who, from their numbers as well as from the progress they had made in settling the country, were entitled to be called into counsel on a matter vitally affecting their interests; yet the very existence of these settlers, numbering some 20,000 souls, appeared to have been ignored throughout the negotiations, unless, indeed, he assumed that they were the "third parties" referred to in Part 3 of the Memorandum addressed by Mr. M'Dougall, on the 28th December last, to the Governor General of Canada, which, as it was very brief, he would read—

"That your Excellency will be pleased to express to his Grace, as the opinion of the Canadian Government, that it is highly expedient that the transfer which the Imperial Parliament has authorized, and the Canadian Parliament approved, should not be delayed by negotiations or correspondence with private or *third parties*, whose position, opinions, and claims have heretofore embarrassed both Governments in dealing with this question."

Admitting that the North American Act of 1867, which in Section 146 sanctioned the incorporation in the Dominion of the then outstanding Colonies upon Addresses of their respective Legislatures to Her Majesty, ordained also that Rupert's Land, not having a separate Legislature, might be incorporated upon Address to Her Majesty by the Parliament of Canada alone; still that provision did not appear to contemplate, still less to sanction, the extinguishment of the inherent common-law rights of these 20,000 British subjects to be allowed a voice in the settlement of their local government and taxation and to have their rights and privileges secured, before the ratification of the transfer of themselves and lands to the absolute sovereignty of another settlement, from which they were divided by a vast desert, and with which they had little communication. Their expectations do not appear to have been at all unreasonable. They

claimed that their local affairs should be administered upon the spot by a District Council and officers of their own selection, and that they should send a representative to the Dominion Parliament; but, unfortunately, whether through oversight or ignorance, these rights were not secured to them. They were sold and handed over, just as sheep were, with the run, in Australia, and the result was an armed demonstration, which must retard the settlement of the country, and it was to be feared would not terminate without bloodshed. It would suffice to adduce one other case, prolific as it was in examples of unequal dealing, inconsistent policy, harsh and ungenerous treatment, such as fully justified the significant language of Sir Philip Wodehouse, that—"the policy of *severance* is being worked out under very painful circumstances in New Zealand."

In that Colony a war originated at a time when the Native affairs were retained under the exclusive management of the Imperial Government. That war, interrupted by an occasional truce, had endured ever since. Whilst it was yet raging the Legislature of the Colony, yielding to the continued solicitations of the Secretary of State, withdrew the positive refusal to take over the management of Native affairs, conveyed in their Memorial of 1868, and on the express condition conveyed in the following explicit language:—

> "In consideration of the thoroughly efficient aid which Her Majesty's Government is now affording, and relying on the cordial co-operation of Her Majesty's Government for the future"

consented to relieve this country from the responsibility of Native affairs.

Earl Granville, speaking of this war in the House of Lords, on the 25th July, 1864, said—

> "It was impossible for the mother country to divest herself entirely of responsibility for her Colonies, especially in case of war. . . . With regard to the origin and commencement of the war now being waged in New Zealand, he believed it to be a just war;"

and the present Prime Minister, being at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared that—

> "He did not see how England could with justice throw the whole responsibility of the war on the Colony;" that "the policy which had led to the war had not been exclusively that of the Colony;" that "the Home Government had approved it, and were so far responsible for it."

Notwithstanding these statements—as just as they were explicit, and notwithstanding the express condition for future aid, under which the Legislature of New Zealand agreed to relieve this country from responsibilities attached to Native affairs, they found that Colony impoverished by the continuance of the war,

and oppressed by the unexampled taxation of £6 5*s.* per head, appealing in vain to the Government of this country not for money, but simply for a guarantee, which, without costing the taxpayers of this country one farthing, would have enabled them to raise a war loan at 4 per cent, instead of 6½ or 7 per cent. When it was noted that the guarantee thus denied to New Zealand, under circumstances amounting to something like a life or death necessity, was at the same moment granted to the Canadian Government—not because of any such necessity, but in furtherance of an object which could not be deemed more than one of expediency—then this denial, grievous and unjust in itself, was aggravated by evident partiality.

The same partiality and absence of any guiding principle was exhibited in the allowance of military aid to the Dominion Government for the suppression of an emeute of a comparatively trifling character, whether they considered the relative forces or the issue at stake—whilst the assistance of a single regiment for which they offered to pay every farthing of expense, was refused to New Zealand, although the Secretary of State was in possession of the Governor's despatch assuring him that, after consultation with General Sir Trevor Chute, and with the Admiral on the station, he had reason to fear that—"the withdrawal of that regiment would lead to a general rising of the Native race, and tragedies as dreadful as those of Delhi and Cawnpore."

In defence of that conduct, it was alleged that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was only carrying out the policy of his predecessors. That statement, however, was not borne out by the facts as disclosed in the Papers before the House. They, on the contrary, exhibited a constantly shifting policy. For example, they found the right hon. Gentleman the present Secretary of State for War, in 1866, and his successor Lord Carnarvon, in 1867, when Secretary for the Colonies, proposing to leave one regiment, on condition that a certain sum was contributed by the Colony—£50,000, he believed—for Native purposes, a condition which had been faithfully complied with. Next they found the noble Duke (the Duke of Buckingham)—in his despatch, dated 8th July, 1869—declaring that Her Majesty's Government had no intention of withdrawing the troops if the Colony would pay for them. And, finally, they had the present Secretary of State, in his despatch of the 21st May last, intimating—"that he would not have ordered the withdrawal of the troops had he been aware that the Colony was willing to make sacrifices;" and yet, in the

month of November following, though informed that the Colony had made provision for payment of all the expenses of the regiment, he abandoned that plea altogether, and peremptorily ordered the withdrawal of the troops on the new plea that possibly they might be employed "in support of a policy," which, as he stated, "the Imperial Government had always regarded as pregnant with danger." And that refusal was persisted in, although a stipulation had been offered that the troops should remain in garrison under direction of Imperial authority, as, in fact, they had remained during the last two years without having been called upon to fire a shot, although hostilities had prevailed incessantly, and settlements had been devastated, women outraged, infants slaughtered almost within sight of the barracks.

The policy which it was alleged the Imperial Government regarded as "pregnant with danger"—as far as could be learned from the despatch of November last—was the confiscation policy and the non-recognition of the so-called Maori king.

What were the facts as regarded those confiscations? Peaceful settlements—without the slightest provocation given, or even alleged to have been given—were attacked by savage fanatics, the women outraged, infants and young children ruthlessly slaughtered, the homesteads, created out of the wilderness by the labour of half a lifetime, given to the flames, implements and materials destroyed, the cattle and horses driven off as plunder.

Year after year that process had been repeated, and as often as the Maori found it desirable to sue for peace—that was, as often as he had expended his ammunition, or his crops required attention—peace was granted him without exacting compensation for the destruction of property, or restoration of the plunder. Under such a system war, always congenial to the Maori, became a very profitable pursuit. In fact, such a system offered the greatest incitements to renew the career of murder and outrage so soon as the necessary ammunition could be obtained from the American whalers which frequented that coast for that express trade.

It was at length found unavoidable to change that policy, and, as a condition of peace, to exact retribution for murder and outrage, and compensation for destruction of property. But upon what could compensation be levied? The rebel Maori possessed no movable property. His lands alone were available for the purpose; and therefore, upon the recommendation of Sir George Grey—in his despatch to the Duke of Newcastle, dated

30th November, 1863—this confiscation policy was adopted by Her Majesty's Government, who at that time retained the management of Native affairs in their own hands exclusively. He would trouble the House with a few extracts from the despatches, setting forth the policy approved by Her Majesty's Government at that time. The Duke of Newcastle, in reply to Sir George Grey's despatch, said—

"I think that any body of Natives which take up arms against Her Majesty on such grounds as those alleged by Waikatoes may properly be punished by a confiscation of a large portion of their common property. I think the lands thus acquired may properly be employed in meeting the expenses of carrying on the war; nor do I see any objection to using them as sites for military settlements."

We find the same policy endorsed by Mr. Cardwell, who succeeded the Duke as Secretary for the Colonies, in the following words:—

"*We have accepted the principles upon which he* (*Sir George Grey*) *has acted*—the chastisement of the guilty Natives—the exaction of a reasonable indemnity for the expenses incurred by the war, and a moderate security for the settlement and future protection of the colonists."

And again—

"The objects which Her Majesty's Government have been desirous of effecting for the colonists were substantially these—they have wished to inflict on the rebel tribes, or some of them, an exemplary punishment in the way of forfeiture of lands, which should deter them from wanton aggression in the future."

Notwithstanding this explicit adoption of the confiscation policy, Her Majesty's Secretary of State, in his despatch of the 7th of October last, intimated, in effect, that troops were withdrawn and a guaranteed loan denied, with the express object of placing the colonists, under compulsion of dire necessity, to purchase a temporary and disgraceful truce by the restoration of the lands most righteously forfeited. He believed that he should be supported by everyone who had any knowledge of savage or semi-civilized races when he said that the restoration of those lands would be viewed by the Maori as an indication of weakness, and would be the signal for a fresh onslaught. The refusal to recognize the sovereignty of the Maori chieftain, who had thrown off his allegiance to Her Majesty and assumed the title of King, was not originally the policy of the colonists, but was transmitted to them as portion of the evil inheritance of which they had undertaken to relieve this country on the conditions he had referred to; and the reversal of that policy at this time would, in the judgment of all who had any knowledge of the true condition of affairs, at once alienate the more powerful and higher-class tribes who remained faithful to their allegiance, and refused to recognize the assumption of a sovereign position by a second-class chieftain.

The New Zealand colonists saw in the policy thus attempted to be forced upon them consequences so disastrous that even the cruel necessity of separation from the mother country would be a preferable alternative. In the language of the Memorandum of the New Zealand Government, in replying to the despatch of the 2nd October—

"They claim that the Colony should be practically recognized as an integral portion of that Empire, and not be thrust out beyond its pale as of infinitely less consideration than a British subject in foreign lands. They ask England for no pecuniary sacrifice; they do not appeal to her compassion; but they do appeal to those eternal principles of justice, which are as much the duty of the strong as they are the heritage of the weak, and which even the most powerful nation should never withhold from the feeblest suppliant."

That the stability of the Empire had received a severe shock through the harshness and the injustice of the course adopted towards New Zealand, was undeniable. What, it was asked, was the utility of union with Great Britain if it did not ensure mutual aid and sympathy in times of difficulty and trial? To affirm that whilst the Colonies remained obnoxious to hostile invasion, in consequence of their connection with Great Britain, they were to be refused succour and countenance in their danger and distress, was an untenable proposition. In the language of a right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Charles Adderley)—

"Such terms of intercourse compose no friendship, nor alliance, nor community, nor solid connection of any sort but a fool's paradise of mutual promises and expectations, equally visionary and evanescent. If the Colonies will undertake the duties as well as the privileges of British citizens, we may go on together as members of one great Empire, each part habitually maintaining itself, and the whole ready to rally round any threatened point."

The passage he had quoted described the true position as regarded the obligations of the Colonies, but the proposition was conversable. It was equally a condition of "our going on together as members of one great Empire," that the parent State should "undertake the duties as well as the privileges of" the head of that great Empire, and that she had not done so in the case of New Zealand was but too painfully manifested. The colonists neither desired nor expected to continue burdensome to the taxpayers of this country. To be self-supporting as well as self-governing was their normal condition; but this, like every other general rule, was subject to exceptions, of which the mutually reciprocal obligation to afford aid and sympathy in time of war, distress, or difficulty was the chief.

He believed that Her Majesty's Government recognized this obligation on the parent State, although the ill-advised course that had been pursued had induced a contrary opinion. He repeated

his belief that the misunderstanding which had arisen was attributable not in any degree to lack of ability or lack of good intentions on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers, but wholly to the unsuitableness of departmental machinery. He had considered various schemes which had been suggested for rectifying that deficiency with the respectful attention that was due to the character and experience of the gentlemen from whom they emanated. Some had proposed to give the Colonies representation in that House; others, the establishment of a Council exterior to, and, as regarded certain great Imperial questions, superior to this Parliament; others, a Council of Advice similar to that which assisted the Secretary of State for India; and he had come to the conclusion that the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies was right in rejecting them one and all, either as impracticable or as inconsistent with the theory of the Constitution.

On the other hand, it was a great error to suppose, as had been asserted by Earl Granville, that the Governors constituted the proper channel of official communication between the Governments of the great self-supporting Colonies and the Secretary of State. The Governors constituted a most suitable channel for conveying to the Colonial Cabinets the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and very potent instruments for promoting that policy; but, as the servants of the Imperial Government, dependent as regarded their future prospects on the favour of the Secretary of State, they were not, and never could be, suitable channels for advocating the colonists' case from the colonists' point of view at the Imperial Court. He was glad to find himself borne out in that view by the right hon. Baronet opposite the Member for Staffordshire, from whose recent very admirable work on *Colonial Policy* he would here read a brief extract—

"It was true that Colonial Governors, however dependent their Ministers might be on the confidence of local representative bodies, are likely enough themselves to keep an eye on the policy of the Home Government, and tune their own course with it."

He would also avail himself of the concurrent testimony of one whose experience had been gathered, like his own, in the administration of Colonial Cabinets. Mr. M'Culloch, late Chief Secretary in the Colony of Victoria, had said, in a recent debate upon the relations with the mother country—

"He deprecated the system which made the Governor, rather than the Ministry of the day, responsible for the despatches which were sent in reply to Imperial communications; these despatches, about which the people in the Colony knew nothing, were taken in England as expressive of the community here, when the fact was neither thepeople nor the Ministry had anything to do with them. This position seemed to him to be a wrong one which should not be continued."

For himself he believed that a very small alteration would suffice to adapt the present machinery of the Colonial Office for the efficient administration of affairs under the novel relations which the great development of the self-governing principle in modern times had brought about. What he believed practicable and also sufficient for the purpose was — First, to limit the veto upon acts of the Colonial Legislature to cases in which those acts infringed upon the Prerogative, or were inconsistent with treaty obligations; secondly, to permit such Colonies, as might elect so to do, to send envoys duly empowered and authenticated, who should stand to the Secretary for the Colonies on precisely the same footing which the envoys or *chargé d'affaires* of foreign countries occupied in their intercourse with the Foreign Secretary, to watch over the interests of their respective Colonies, entitled to be made cognizant of any measure in contemplation affecting them, and that, before the Minister had committed himself by any action to a particular course; entitled, moreover, to proffer advice and suggestions, which, being founded on personal experience, would prove invaluable to the Secretary of State, and secure him from falling into errors such as had recently been committed.

What would be thought of a suggestion that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, instead of being advised as at present by ambassadors or *chargé d'affaires*, duly authenticated from the Governments with which we have diplomatic relations, should be advised respecting the affairs of those countries by officers of his own appointing, who had neither special knowledge respecting those affairs, nor any mission to advocate the interests of those countries from their own special point of view; but, on the contrary, a direct interest to square their advice in accordance with the proclivities of the Secretary of State on whose favor they were dependent for future advancement?

Surely no one would affirm that such an arrangement was calculated to perpetuate friendly relations; but, on the contrary, would expect from it the frequent occurrence of mistakes and misconceptions, giving rise to recriminations and antagonistic feeling. Yet this was precisely the machinery by means of which our diplomatic relations with the great self-governing Colonies were conducted. Every man of practical experience would acknowledge the immense advantage of personal interviews for preventing difficulties and irritations, and for smoothing them away when they arose, and he firmly believed that if

either of the Colonial statesmen now in this country on a special mission from New Zealand, had been authenticated from the commencement, and before the Secretary for the Colonies had committed himself to a particular course, that course would have been modified and the heartburnings and alienation of feeling, which all must deplore, would have been avoided. It had been objected that the policy which he now advocated would tend to relax instead of drawing closer the bond of union. He would reply that the bond of union between the parent State and the now adult Colonies was not strengthened but strained by an unduly close association perpetuating the condition appropriate to nonage, and the conviction forced upon him by a long and varied experience in Colonial affairs was, that the alternative lay between ultimate separation and the recognition of those Colonies on the same footing as foreign States in alliance so far as regards this matter of diplomatic relations.

He believed he had made out a sufficient case for inquiry. He had occupied the attention of the House at too great length. Conscious as he was of inability to do justice to so great a subject, he must thankfully acknowledge the kind attention with which the House had favoured him. Loyalty and patriotism were potent spirits, had worked wonders in times past, and might again; but they were spirits intangible, incorporeal—once evaporated they could never again lay hold of them. They were lost for ever. This consideration should temper and guide not only our dealings, but our tone of communication with our great self-maintaining and self-governing Colonies.

A great opportunity now presented itself for consolidating, on an even and permanent basis, the union of their great Colonial Empire—an opportunity which, if allowed to pass away, might never return, for uniting those great self-governing communities with the parent State by the bond of a common allegiance, affording to each the advantages of common citizenship, and to both the strength of union in a great Empire.

LONDON: CORNELIUS BUCK, 23, PATERNOSTER ROW.